

for which him lyked in his songes shewe
Thenceson of his wo, as he best mighte,
And make a song of wordes but a few,
Somwhat his woful herte for to lighte.
And whan he was from every mannes sighte,
With softe voys he, of his lady dere,
That was absent, gan singe as ye may here.

O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
With herte soor wel oughte I to bewaile,
That ever derk in torment, night by night,
Toward my deeth with wind in stere I sayle;
for which the tenth night if that I fayle
The gyding of thy bemes brighte an houre,
My ship and me Caribdis wol devoure.

This song when he thus songen hadde, sone
He fil ayein into his sykes olde;
And every night, as was his wone to done,
He stood the brighte mone to beholde,
And al his sorwe he to the mone tolde;
And seyde: Ywis, whan thou art horned newe,
I shal be glad, if al the world be trewe!

I saugh thyn hornes olde eek by the morwe,
Whan hennes rood my righte lady dere,
That cause is of my torment and my sorwe;
for whiche, O brighte Lucina the clere,
for love of God, ren faste aboute thy spere!
for whan thyn hornes newe ginne springe,
Than shal she come, that may my blisse bringe!

The day is more, and lenger every night,
Than they be wont to be, him thoughte tho;
And that the sonne wente his course unright
By lenger wey than it was wont to go;
And seyde: Ywis, me dredeth evermo,
The sonnes sone, Pheton, be onlyve,
And that his fadres cart amis he dryve.

Apon the wallis faste eek wolde he walke,
And on the Grekes ost he wolde see,
And to himself right thus he wolde talke:
Lo, yonder is myn owene lady free,
Or elles yonder, ther tho tentes be!
And thennes comth this eyr, that is so sote,
That in my soule I fele it doth me bote.

And hardely this wind, that more and more
Thus stoundemele encreseth in my face,
Is of my ladies depe sykes sore.
I preve it thus, for in non othere place
Of al this toun, save onliche in this space,
fele I no wind that souneth so lyk peyne;
It seyth: Allas! why twinned be we tweyne?

This longe tyme he dryveth forth right thus,
Til fully passed was the nynte night;
And ay bisyde him was this Pandarus,
That bisily dide alle his fulle might
Him to comferte, and make his herte light;
Yevinge him hope alwey, the tenth morwe
That she shal come, and stinten al his sorwe.

Apon that other syde eek was Criseyde,
With wommen fewe, among the Grekes stronge;
for which ful ofte a day, Allas! she seyde,
That I was born! Wel may myn herte longe
After my deeth; for now live I to longe!
Allas! and I ne may it not amende;
for now is wors than ever yet I wende.

My fader nil for nothing do me grace
To goon ayein, for nought I can him queme;
And if so be that I my terme passe,
My Troilus shal in his herte deme
That I am fals, and so it may wel seme.
Thus shal I have unthank on every syde;
That I was born, so weylaway the tyde!

And if that I me putte in jupartye,
To stele away by nighte, and it bifalle
That I be caught, I shal be holde a spye;
Or elles, lo, this drede I most of alle,
If in the hondes of som wrecche I falle,
I am but lost, al be myn herte trewe;
Now mighty God, thou on my sorwe rew!

Ful pale ywaxen was hir brighte face,
Hir limes lene, as she that al the day
Stood whan she dorste, and loked on the place
Ther she was born, and ther she dwelt hadde ay,
And al the night wepinge, allas! she lay.
And thus despaired, out of alle cure,
She ladde hir lyf, this woful creature.

Ful ofte a day she sighte eek for destresse,
And in herself she wente ay portrayinge
Of Troilus the grete worthinesse,
And alle his goodly wordes recordinge
Sin first that day hir love bigan to springe.
And thus she sette hir woful herte afyre
Thorough remembraunce of that she gan desyre.

In al this world ther nis so cruel herte
That hir hadde herd compleynen in hir sorwe,
That nolde han wopen for hir peynes smerte,
So tendrely she weep, bothe eve and morwe,
Hir nedede no teres for to borwe.
And this was yet the worst of al hir peyne,
Ther was no wight to whom she dorste hir pleyne.

Ful rewfully she loked upon Troye,
Biheld the toures heighe and eek the halles;
Allas! quod she, the plesaunce and the joye
The whiche that now al torned into galle is,
Have I had ofte withinne yonder wallis!
O Troilus, what dostow now, she seyde;
Lord! whether yet thou thenke upon Criseyde?

Allas! I ne hadde trowed on your lore,
And went with yow, as ye me radde er this!
Thanne hadde I now not syked half so sore.
Who mighte have seyde, that I had doon amis
To stele away with swich on as he is?
But al to late cometh the letuarie,
Whan men the cors unto the grave carie.

To late is now to speke of this matere;
Prudence, allas! oon of thyn eyen three
Me lakked alwey, er that I cam here;
On tyme ypassed, wel remembered me;
And present tyme eek coude I wel ysee.
But futur tyme, er I was in the snare,
Coude I not seen; that causeth now my care.

But natheles, bityde what bityde,
I shal tomorwe at night, by est or weste,
Out of this ost stele on som maner syde,
And go with Troilus wheras him leste.
This purpos wol I holde, and this is beste.
No fors of wikked tonges janglerye,
for ever on love han wrecches had envye.

for whoso wole of every word take hede,
Or rewlen him by every wightes wit,
Neshal he never thryven, out of drede.
for that that som men blamen ever yit,
Lo, other maner folk commenden it.
And as for me, for al swich variaunce,
felicitee clepe I my suffisaunce.

for which, withouten any wordes mo,
To Troye I wol, as for conclusioun.
But God it wot, er fully monthes two,
She was ful fer fro that entencioun.
for bothe Troilus and Troye toun
Shal knottles throughout hir herte slyde;
for she wol take a purpos for tabyde.

This Diomed, of whom yow telle I gan,
Goth now, withinne himself ay arguinge
With al the sleighte and al that ever he can,
How he may best, with shortest taryinge,
Into his net Criseydes herte bringe.
To this entente he coude never fyne;
To fissen hir, he leyde out hook and tyne.

But natheles, wel in his herte he thoughte,
That she nas nat withoute a love in Troye.
for never, sithen he hir thennes broughte,
Ne coude he seen her laugh or make joye.
He niste how best hir herte for to coveye.
But for to assaye, he seyde, it nought ne
greveth;
for he that nought nassayeth, nought nacheveth.

Yet seide he to himself upon a night:
Now am I not a fool, that woot wel how
hir wo for love is of another wight,
And hereupon to goon assaye hir now?
I may wel wite, it nil not been my prow.
for wyse folk in bokes it expresse:
Men shall not wowe a wight in hevinesse.

But whoso mighte winnen swich a flour
from him, for whom she morneth night and day,
he mighte seyn, he were a conquerour.
And right anoon, as he that bold was ay,
Thoughte in his herte: Happe, how happe may,
Al sholde I deye, I wole hir herte seche;
I shal no more lesen but my speche.

This Diomed, as bokes us declare,
Was in his nedes preat and courageous;
With sterne voys and mighty limes square,
Hardy, testif, strong, and chevalrous
Of dedes, lyk his fader Tideus.
And som men seyn, he was of tunge large;
And heir he was of Calidoine and Arge.

Criseyde mene was of hir stature,
Therto of shap, of face, and eek of chere,
Ther mighte been no fairer creature.
And ofte tyme this was hir manere,
To gon yressed with hir heres clere
Down by hir coler at hir bak bihinde,
Which with a threde of golde she wolde binde.

And, save hir browes joyneden yfere,
Ther nas no lak, in ought I can espyen;
But for to speken of hir eyen clere,
Lo, trewely, they writen that hir syen,
That Paradys stood formed in hir yen.
And with hir riche beautee evermore
Strof love in hir, ay which of hem was more.

She sobre was, eek simple, and wys withal,
The beste ynorissched eek that mighte be,
And goodly of hir speche in general,
Charitable, estatliche, lusty, and free;
Ne nevermo ne lakked hir pitee;
Tendre/herted, slydinge of corage;
But trewely, I can not telle hir age.

And Troilus wel waxen was in highte,
And complet formed by proporcioun
So wel, that kinde it not amenden mighte;
Yong, fresshe, strong, and hardy as lyoun;
Trewe as steel in ech condicioun;
On of the beste enteched creature,
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.

And certainly in storie it is yfounde,
That Troilus was never unto no wight,
As in his tyme, in no degree secounde.
In durring don that longeth to a knight.
Al mighte a geaunt passen him of might,
his herte ay with the firste and with the beste
Stod paregal, to durre don that him leste.

But for to tellen forth of Diomed:
It fil that after, on the tenth day,
Sin that Criseyde out of the citee yede,
This Diomed, as fresshe as braunche in May,
Come to the tente thetas Calkas lay,
And feyned him with Calkas han to done;
But what he mente, I shal yow telle sone.

Criseyde, at shorte wordes for to telle,
Welcomed him, and down by hir him sette;
And he was ethe ynough to maken dwelle.
And after this, withouten longe lette,
The spyces and the wyn men forth hem fette;
And forth they speke of this and that yfere,
As freendes doon, of which som shal ye here.